

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PORT O 02460 251520Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 AGRE-00 CEA-01 CIAE-00
COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 FRB-03 H-01 INR-10 INT-05
L-03 LAB-04 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 CTME-00 AID-05
SS-15 STR-07 ITC-01 TRSE-00 ICA-11 SP-02 SOE-02
OMB-01 DOE-15 /125 W
-----108385 251618Z /45

P 251513Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2859
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, JA, XM
SUBJECT: US-JAPAN ANNUAL CONSULTATIONS ON LATIN AMERICA
REF: STATE 212939

1. WE ASSUME THAT, DESPITE THE FACT THAT THE JAPANESE HAVE THE ASSIGNED RESPONSIBILITY FOR LEADING OFF THE DISCUSSION OF "DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE" (REFTEL PARA 2), ARA WILL COME DOWN HARD ON THEM FOR A MEANINGFUL CONTRIBUTION TO THE WORK OF THE CARIBBEAN GROUP. WE RECALL, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT ABOUT TWO MONTHS AGO WASHINGTON WAS ENDEAVORING TO GET A COMMITMENT FROM THE GOJ TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROSPECTIVE CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT FACILITY, BUT WE HAVE NOT HEARD OF THE RESULTS IF THERE HAVE BEEN ANY.

2. THE JAPANESE, WHETHER THEY REALIZE IT OR NOT (AND THE LATTER APPEARS TO BE THE CASE), HAVE AN INTEREST IN IMPROVING THEIR IMAGE IN THIS AREA, AT LEAST IN T&T. WE PER-
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PAGE 02 PORT O 02460 251520Z

CEIVE A FEELING OF RESENTMENT--NOT YET STRONG BUT CLEARLY GROWING--AMONG T&T BUSINESSMEN AND SOME GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS THAT THE JAPANESE ARE ACTIVELY "DUMPING" (IN A NON-GATT SENSE) MORE AND MORE OF THEIR PRODUCTS IN THE REGION WHILE TAKING VERY LITTLE IN RETURN. "THEY ARE ONLY INTERESTED IN BUYING; THEY ARE NOT INTERESTED IN ANYTHING WE HAVE TO PROVIDE OUTSIDE OF SOME RAW MATERIALS," IS A COMMON REFRAIN

HEARD IN LOCAL ECONOMIC CIRCLES. THE IMPRESSION HERE ALSO IS THAT THE GOJ IS PROVIDING MINISCULE ASSISTANCE TO THE CARIBBEAN AND ASSIGNS THE AREA THE VERY LOWEST PRIORITY IN THEIR OTHER-THAN-EXPORT-AIMED FOREIGN RELATIONS ACTIVITIES (IN PORT OF SPAIN THE GOJ IS REPRESENTED ONLY BY AN AFFABLE BUT INEFFECTIVE CHARGE; THE ACCREDITED AMBASSADOR AND ALL OTHER STAFF RESIDE IN CARACAS AND ARE SELDOM SEEN HERE).

3. TO GIVE ONE SPECIFIC ILLUSTRATION OF THIS FEELING OF JAPANESE OPPORTUNISM IN T&T, AN ARTICLE IN THIS WEEK'S WIDELY-READ "NATIONAL TARGET" PUTS JAPAN'S 1977 TRADE SURPLUS WITH THE SO-CALLED "LESS DEVELOPED COUNTRIES OF SOUTH AMERICA" AT \$1.9 BILLION, AND CONTENDS THAT IN RESPONSE:

--COLOMBIA HAS PUT AN IMPORT BAN INTO EFFECT AGAINST JAPANESE CARS, ELECTRONICS AND CONSUMER DURABLES;

--ANTIGUA HAS PUT ALL JAPANESE GOODS UNDER IMPORT LICENSE; AND

--THE FOREIGN MINISTER OF BARBADOS, QUOTE ECHOED BY OTHER POLITICIANS IN THE CARIBBEAN, SAID IN JULY THAT UNLESS JAPAN RIGHTED THE (TRADE) BALANCE, INNER QUOTE WE WILL TOGETHER MAKE SURE THAT SHE GETS OUT OF THE CARIBBEAN END INNER AND OUTER QUOTE.

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PAGE 03 PORT O 02460 251520Z

4. WE DO NOT HAVE THE DATA TO EVALUATE THE CLAIMS BEING HEARD ABOUT EITHER JAPANESE TRADE OR OFFICIAL/UNOFFICIAL CAPITAL FLOWS WITH THE CARIBBEAN AS A REGION, BUT T&T-ORIGIN EXPORTS TO JAPAN ARE RUNNING AT A RATE CLOSE TO A HALF OF ONE PER CENT OF JAPANESE EXPORTS TO THIS COUNTRY. O'MAHONY

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